

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Maxine Brown-Roberts, Project Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: December 4, 2012

SUBJECT: BZA Case 18465 – St Patrick’s Day School, Whitehaven Campus
4700 Whitehaven Parkway, NW

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the special exception relief requested by St. Patrick’s Episcopal Day School, (“School” or “applicant”), in accordance with §§ 205 and 206 to increase the number of students from 440 to 485 subject to the conditions outlined in Attachment 1¹ and any conditions recommended by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT).

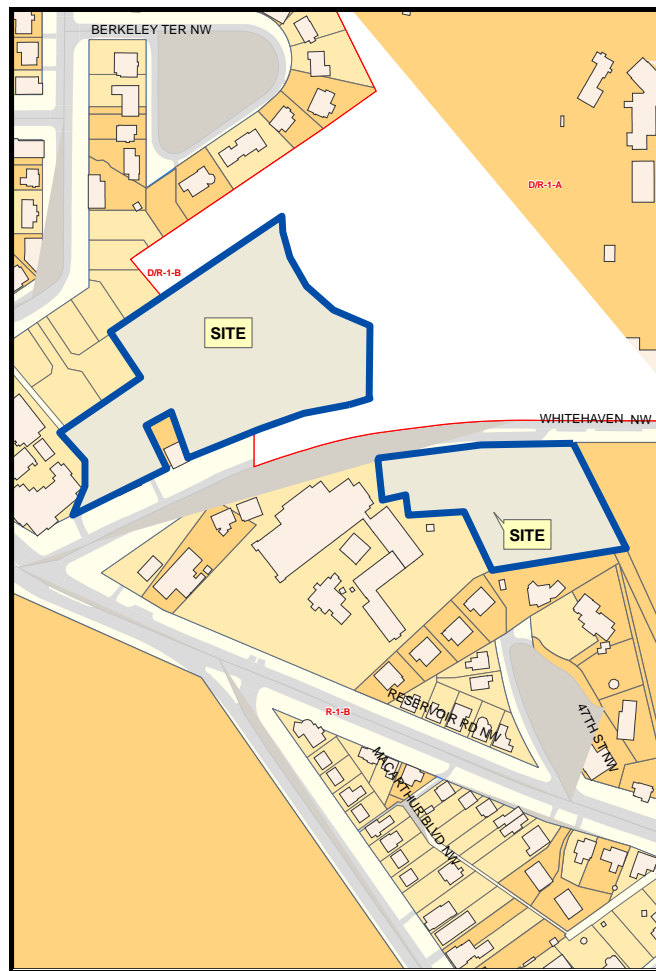
II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

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| Address | 4700 Whitehaven Parkway, NW |
| Legal Description | Square 1372, Lot 817; Square 1374, Lots 838, 839 ² and 857 |
| Ward/ANC | 3/ANC-3D |
| Lot Characteristics | The subject property is comprised of two irregularly shaped parcels to the north and south of Whitehaven Parkway. The northern portion is 3.70 acres while the southern portion is 1.72 acres. |
| Zoning | R-1-B and D/R-1-B – a private school and child development center are allowed by special exception in accordance § 205 and 206. |
| Existing Development | Northern Parcel - The property is developed with the gymnasium/athletic building. Southern Parcel – St. Patrick’s church and school. |
| Historic District | Not within a historic district. |

¹ The proposed conditions include the consolidations of conditions from prior BZA approvals for the school. OP has reviewed these conditions with the applicant and is in agreement with all 13.

² Lots 838 and 839 are owned by St. Patrick’s but are not used for school purposes.

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| Adjacent Properties | <p>Southern Parcel: To the east is undeveloped, US lands; to the south is a single-family, detached, residential community; and to the west is the Lab School.</p> <p>Northern Parcel – To the east and north is the George Washington University Mt. Vernon Campus; to the northwest is the single-family, detached, residential community; and to the west is Our Lady of Victory church.</p> |
| Surrounding Neighborhood Character | <p>The area surrounding the school is mixture of single family detached residences and institutional uses.</p> |



Location Plan



Aerial Photograph

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

St. Patrick’s School proposes to increase its child development center and elementary/middle school student enrollment cap from 390-440 to 485 at its Whitehaven campus. The faculty/staff cap will remain at 105.

IV. BACKGROUND

According to the applicant, in 1956 a nursery school was operated out of the St. Patrick’s Church located at the corner of Foxhall and Reservoir Road. This was expanded in 1967 to include elementary through grade 6 programs and eventually the school moved to 4900 Whitehaven Parkway. The school has expanded and now has three campuses, the Whitehaven campus (subject of this application; the MacArthur campus at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard, NW for grades 7 and 8; and the Foxhall campus at 1801 Foxhall Road which has a playing field and is projected to accommodate a high school in the future. Students from the MacArthur Boulevard campus also travel to the subject site for some classes and activities.

The Whitehaven campus has been the subject of multiple Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) approvals as shown on the table below:

| YEAR | CASE NUMBER | REQUEST | BZA DECISION |
|-------------------|-------------|--|--------------------------|
| March 6, 1975 | BZA 11307 | SE for the establishment of a school for 280 preschool and elementary school students and 29 teachers at 4759 Reservoir Rd. | Approved with conditions |
| February 19, 1976 | BZA 11933 | SE for modification to the building for the establishment of pre-school and elementary school at 4759 Reservoir Rd. | Approved with condition |
| December 28, 1983 | BZA 14009 | SE for an addition to the school; cap of 280 elementary students and 110 for a child development center; a cap of 48 faculty and staff; required parking on Square 1374, part of Lot 847 | Approved with conditions |
| February 11, 1991 | BZA 15347 | SE addition and alteration to the existing church and school and to increase the number for students from 390 to 440; increase staff from 51 to 60 | Approved with conditions |
| December 28, 1999 | BZA 16517 | SE to add new 1-story athletic building with gym on Square 1374, Lot 5; to renovate an existing classroom at Square 1372, Lot 817. | Approved with conditions |
| October 7, 2004 | BZA 17081 | SE for modification to staff cap of 60 to 105 total faculty and staff. | Approved with conditions |
| March 9, 2009 | BZA 17883 | SE to expand the campus in Square 1374 by adding Lots 854 and 855 for outdoor physical education and science program space (no new structures) | Approved |

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Child Development Center

205.1 Use as a child/elderly development center or adult day treatment facility shall be permitted as a special exception in an R-1 District if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment under § 3104, subject to the provisions of this section.

The child development center is in the R-1-B and the D/R-1-B district.

205.2 The center or facility shall be capable of meeting all applicable code and licensing requirements.

The center is currently meeting all applicable code and licensing requirements.

205.3 The center or facility shall be located and designed to create no objectionable traffic condition and no unsafe condition for picking up and dropping off persons in attendance.

Since 2002, the school has operated a Carpool Initiative that monitors average vehicle occupancy to and from the campus and reports quarterly to both DDOT and ANC-3D. Because of this initiative,

queuing at pick up and drop of times are minimized. The DDOT Report will address this issue in more detail.

205.4 The center or facility shall provide sufficient off-street parking spaces to meet the reasonable needs of teachers, other employees, and visitors.

Overall, the center and school require 62 spaces. A total of 92 spaces are provided, 32 in the church parking lot and 62 in the garage on the north portion of the property. Therefore, adequate off-street parking is provided.

205.5 The center or facility, including any outdoor play space provided, shall be located and designed so that there will be no objectionable impacts on adjacent or nearby properties due to noise, activity, visual, or other objectionable conditions.

The school buildings are setback from the adjacent residences. The applicant states that the students are indoors for a significant portion of the day and do not create any noise that would disturb the residents. The nursery school and kindergarten playgrounds are located between the school building and residence. The playgrounds are setback and a vegetative buffer helps to mitigate noise and visual impacts on the residences.

205.6 The Board may require special treatment in the way of design, screening of buildings, planting and parking areas, signs, or other requirements as it deems necessary to protect adjacent and nearby properties.

OP does not propose any special treatments.

205.7 Any off-site play area shall be located so as not to result in endangerment to the individuals in attendance at center or facility in traveling between the play area and the center or facility itself.

The nursery students are not taken to any off-site play areas.

205.8 The Board may approve more than one (1) child/elderly development center or adult day treatment facility in a square or within one thousand feet (1,000 ft.) of another child/elderly development center or adult day treatment facility only when the Board finds that the cumulative effect of these facilities will not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood due to traffic, noise, operations, or other similar factors.

There are no other child development centers within the square and or within 1,000 feet of the property.

205.9 Before taking final action on an application for use as a child/elderly development center or adult day treatment facility, the Board shall submit the application to the D.C. Departments of Transportation and Human Services, the D.C. Office on Aging, and the D.C. Office of Planning for review and written reports.

205.10 The referral to the D.C. Department of Human Services shall request advice as to whether the proposed center or facility can meet all licensing requirements set forth in the applicable laws of the District of Columbia.

In verbal conversations with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education, Compliance and Integrity Division, Child Care Licensing Unit (OSSE/ECE/CID/CCLU) it was stated that the child development center currently meets all the licensing requirements will continue to do so if the the increase in the number of children is approved.

Private School

Special Exception relief pursuant to § 206

206.1 Use as a public school that does not meet the requirements of chapter 4 of this title or as a private school, but not including a trade school, and residences for teachers and staff of a private school, shall be permitted as a special exception in an R-1 District if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment under § 3104, subject to the provisions of this section.

The property is within the R-1-A district which allows private schools if the requirements of § 206 are met.

206.2 The school shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions.

The application states that the school is operating with minimal impact on the surrounding community.

Noise

The students, faculty and staff will be accommodated within the existing facilities. School hours are between 7:30 am and 6:00 pm except for instances when there are after school activities. BZA 16517 limits use of the school facilities to school and church purposes or other non-profit organizations, for a maximum of three times a month, while the playing field may be used by the school or church on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, and by non-school and non-church organizations during this time only once per month. Further, use of the playing field is not permitted beyond 6:00 p.m. Noise from the site is also controlled by not allowing the use of permanent sound systems while portable sound systems may only be used at school and church events during daytime hours. Outdoor recreational areas and activities on Lot 817 are buffered from the adjacent residences. The applicant states that they have met these commitments

Traffic

Since 2002, the school has operated a Carpool Initiative that monitors average vehicle occupancy to and from the campus and reports quarterly to both DDOT and ANC-3D. Because of this initiative, queuing at pick up and drop of times are minimized. The School states that the additional student

drop-off and pick-up will be incorporated into the current program and it should continue to have minimal impact on the queuing. Full analysis of the traffic and the Carpool Initiative will be provided under separate cover by DDOT.

Number of Students

BZA Order 15347 approved a cap of 440 students and the proposal is to increase to 485 students (86 in the child development center and 355 in the school). OP does not see an adverse impact from the additional students, other than the potential impact of additional vehicles and how it is incorporated into the Carpool Initiative.

Other Objectionable Conditions

BZA Order 16517 has conditions relating to evergreen buffers to mitigate visual and aural effects of the building and the playing field, limiting lighting to only that required for security and identification purposes and limiting visibility from the Berkeley Terrace residence. Lights on the playing field are forbidden and lights on the parking lot should be focused downwards to prevent light spillage to adjacent properties. In addition no fixtures or attachments are permitted on the roof of the gymnasium roof and stadium seating or bleachers are prohibited on the playing field. With these prohibitions the school will continue to have no objectionable effects on the adjacent residences.

206.3 Ample parking space, but not less than that required in chapter 21 of this title, shall be provided to accommodate the students, teachers, and visitors likely to come to the site by automobile.

The Zoning Regulations requires 1 space per 4 teachers for the child development center and 2 spaces per 3 faculty/staff for the school for a total of 62 spaces required. The school currently provides 62 parking spaces in the garage on the northern portion of the property and 30 spaces in the church parking lot for a total of 92 spaces. The proposal would not increase the faculty/staff and therefore, the existing parking provided is adequate to serve the school. Further analysis of the parking and its impact will be provided by DDOT.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

The District Department of Transportation and COSSE will submit their report under separate cover.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The school is within ANC-3D. The ANC reviewed the proposal at its November 7, 2012 meeting and recommended approval of the application.

ATTACHMENT 1

Conditions of Approval

1. The number of students shall not exceed four hundred and eighty-five (485). This enrollment cap shall apply to Nursery through Grade 8 located on the Whitehaven Campus. The total number of staff and faculty shall not exceed one hundred and five (105) persons.
2. The Applicant shall file an annual report with the Advisory Neighborhood Commission indicating the total number of faculty and staff, with a breakdown showing how the number of employees is no greater than 105 persons.
3. The Applicant shall hold quarterly meetings with the Advisory Neighborhood Commission and the community.
4. The evergreen buffer required by Order No. 14009, as amended, will be maintained to mitigate the visual and aural effects of the gymnasium approved in Order No. 16517.
5. There will be no exterior lighting of the gymnasium except that required for security and identification purposes.
6. No light fixture attached to the gymnasium or installed in the adjacent parking lot shall be visible from an occupied level of a Berkeley Terrace residence.
7. There will be no lighting of the playing field. Any lighting of the parking lot will be installed such that the rays are directed toward the surface of the lot to avoid an impact on adjacent properties.
8. There will be no sound systems installed outside on the playing field. Portable sound systems may be used only in connection with school and church events and only during daytime hours, subject to reasonable limitations (or instruction to the coaches or masters of ceremony).
9. The gymnasium roof shall remain free of any fixtures or attachments, such as lights, HVAC equipment, antennas and satellite dishes.
10. St. Patrick’s shall install and maintain evergreen trees along the southern edge of the playing field.
11. The school facilities shall be used for school and church purposes only except that non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations, such as community groups, may use school facilities subject to a maximum of three times a month. On Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, the playing field may be used for school or church purposes. Use by non-school, non-church organizations during this time shall be limited to once per month.
12. There shall be a 6:00 pm curfew on the use of the playing field.
13. No stadium seating or bleachers shall be constructed either of a temporary or a permanent nature or shall be installed on the playing field level.